

## Nancy and Her Best Friend Hunt a Noise

By RUTH CLEMENT FARRELL

ONE morning when Dr. Sun was shining very brightly and making a great deal of heat for the month of May grandfather and Nancy were taking a walk hand in hand in the garden when they heard a funny knocking sound coming from among the rows of lima beans. "Tap, tap, tap," it came, just so often.

"What is that, granfadder?" asked Nancy.

"Well, let's go and see," answered grandfather.

So off they went, toward the forest of beanpoles. When they got there not a person or a thing was to be seen, but the same noise kept coming from a tree in front of the house. Again they were disappointed, for when they reached the tree there was no one there.

From another tree a little further away came the same noise. At last, as they went quietly over the soft grass, they seemed to reach the place where the sound came from, but *still* there was no one in sight.

"Is there a pixie in the tree trying to get out, granfadder?" asked Nancy.

"S-s-s-h!" warned grandfather, and he pointed half way up the tree with his stick. Nancy looked and saw a little bird in a black and white checkered suit of feathers, with a bright red topnot on his head. He was so busy digging into the bark of the tree that he did not see Nancy, and grandfather showed her how when the bird perches on the trunk of a tree his tail, which is short and stubby, rests upon the bark and props him up, taking a great deal of his weight off his feet and helping him to keep his balance.

"He is called the woodpecker, Nancy," said grandfather, "because he 'pecks' at the wood with his bill. He is about the brightest colored bird that lives near here, although robin redbreast is pretty gay, too."

Nancy asked all sorts of questions, and grandfather told her how the birds that live in warm places have the gayest feathers. "The further South you go," grandfather said, "the brighter colors the birds wear."

Then grandfather told Nancy about the humming-birds that live in Virginia. They are tiny, tiny birds, and have lovely shining wings—of gold and bronze and purple and green. They have very long bills, which they poke far down into the flowers and drink all the sweet juices.

The yellow canaries, grandfather told Nancy, that live only in cages in the North are much happier in their

real homes in the far South. They are the brightest colored of all the singing birds.

Then Nancy heard about parrots and parrakeets, that are gay in color, too. They live very far away to the South, and are often green, though some have yellow and red feathers.

"Did you ever hear about cockatoos, Nancy?" grandfather asked. "They are white, and some of them have bright pink features standing up on their heads. Then there are macaws. They live very far South and their colors are very gay. These birds are lovely to look at, but they make the most dreadful noises, that might frighten a little girl.

"The birds with a sweet song nearly always wear soft colors," grandfather went on. "The nightingale and thrush are small and have plain brown feathers. And then there are many other birds, Nancy, like wrens, pigeons, martins and swallows that cannot sing and that do not have pretty feathers, but which still are very friendly and very nice to know."

Then it was time to go home.

(Next week grandfather carries a magic cane.)



## Any Parent to Any Child

If you will clear away  
the dust  
And polish up my  
floor,  
We'll have a party  
every day  
From two o'clock  
to four.

R. C. F.

